

**From:** [Charick, Kim](#)  
**To:** [Swingle, Pam](#); [Alfano, Barbara](#); [Cheeks, Thornell](#); [Rodriguez, Matthew](#); [Moura, Rafaela](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Potential collaboration with City of Atlanta?  
**Date:** Monday, May 4, 2020 11:43:18 AM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)

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Barbara ,  
Pam is correct, below is a summary of the grant:  
**Lifecycle Building Center, Atlanta (Priority Area- Built Environment) This project was awarded a \$50,000 grant.** Atlanta “Build Reuse” and Deconstruction Pilot Training. Create a “Reuse for Communities Toolkit” partnering with the Building Materials Reuse Association (BMRA) to bring to communities across the Country. Develop a network of deconstruction and reclamation creating a large/new job market and this included a broad vision for the metro-Atlanta area.  
Thanks,  
Kim

**Additional information from the grant:**

The concept built into our core assumptions is that decon presents a unique opportunity for residents to engage in an industry that inherently provides 7 jobs for every one job in demolition, with access to even more jobs through the creation of marketplaces for the materials that are salvaged. Many of our fellow BMRA member organizations around the nation are dedicated to this mission and, together, are salvaging millions of pounds of materials and providing thousands of jobs to those in need.

LBC and the BMRA address waste and poverty reduction through their support of and advocacy for reuse locally and throughout the country. The BMRA does this through its deconstruction trainings and certification, through connecting reuse professionals to each other to learn, share, and support one another, and through our annual conference.

LBC addresses waste and poverty issues locally through:

- the sale of reclaimed building materials to the general public at 50-85% off retail, with a majority of their customers being “needs based” and who rely heavily on LBC’s reuse center to make critical home repairs that would otherwise be beyond their reach.
- the donation of free building materials to schools, churches and other nonprofits through their Nonprofit Material MATCH program, which has served over 175 organizations.
- a total community savings of \$2.8 million since 2011 through material discounts and in-kind material grants.

As stated above, the material reuse industry also supports local jobs; for every one job in demolition of a house an average of 7 jobs are created through deconstructing that same house. Not measured at this time are the jobs that are then created through the reuse centers themselves and the spinoff upcycling markets that are created by repurposing these salvaged materials. Most of these jobs are entry level positions that are often created through programs which encourage the hiring of people with barriers.

This project is designed to jumpstart the further development of a deconstruction and reuse economy in Atlanta. Atlanta has a strong reuse community, but in many ways it is still in the early stages and is far below the level of its potential. That said, Atlanta does have a very strong sustainability movement with many players, including the City’s administration itself, which is setting impressive goals for waste diversion. What is not yet clear is how many of these sustainability goals

will ultimately be achieved. We strongly believe that our pilot program, with the help of the BMRA, can harness much of the existing work being done by LBC and other local sustainability organizations, businesses, academics, and community leaders. We can do this by systematically introducing deconstruction and reuse of building materials as a tool for meeting local sustainability goals.

We believe that waste and poverty will not end until the material wealth inherent in our economy and our built environment is no longer a commodity based on a linear model that leaves out a significant part of our population. We believe strongly that deconstruction and reuse should be one of the cornerstones of this new economic model for our built environment and that the potential for us to do this, and incorporate job creation for people with barriers, is tremendous.

Deconstruction and reuse is not a new idea, people have been deconstructing buildings and reusing the materials from them since we first put one rock on top of another to create shelter. So our goal is not to create something new, but to make deconstruction and material reuse the “norm” once again. And to utilize the experience and national network of the BMRA, alongside existing local institutions, to bring this about and “foster alignment and the sharing of information among employers and job-training programs. Strong partnerships across Atlanta’s business community, institutions of higher education and the workforce development field are essential to attract and retain new and innovative business ventures and create more concrete pathways to employment for low-income residents. To meet the needs of employers, people must have access to training programs that prepare them for family-supporting jobs. In a survey of 200 metro Atlanta organizations with employment or job-training programs, less than one third reported working directly with an employer.” *Annie E Casey - “As Atlanta’s Economy Thrives, Many Residents Are Left Behind”*

The basic concept of this project is to extend the work started by the BMRA and REDF (The Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) to introduce deconstruction and reuse to Atlanta and create sustainable, high-quality employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed workers. This pilot provides LBC and the City an opportunity to take advantage of the experience of the BMRA and its leadership to explore the potential of deconstruction trainings in Atlanta for people with barriers to employment. The BMRA is using the Atlanta pilot program to create a “template” for introducing decon and reuse in more cities across the country. Our current focus has been the identification of local partners willing to help us build out a series of trainings. Our hope is that EPA Region 4 can be one of the local partners who helps us move to this next stage.

The stated goals of our original pilot are to:

- Increase diversion of usable building materials from area landfills
- Utilize the salvaged materials to create economic opportunities in the local community through the creation of new deconstruction and reuse businesses
- Create jobs for individuals with barriers to employment in deconstruction and reuse

The strategy of the project is that **BMRA will conduct deconstruction trainings in Atlanta with the help of LBC and the City** to create a workforce that can support the expansion of Atlanta’s material reuse industry. However, this alone is not enough to ensure the success of a deconstruction and reuse industry in Atlanta. Consequently, our pilot is also focused on identifying and removing the barriers to decon and reuse, building networks of support [such as a local BMRA Chapter, for example] for those interested in reuse, and encourage the growth of reuse businesses such as LBC and potential upcycle startups that would take the salvaged materials and turn them into value-added products. One example would be to take beautiful old growth timber reclaimed from an old building and turn it into tables for a home or restaurant.

The long-term objective of the deconstruction pilot program is to position LBC and others in Atlanta to become deconstruction training providers, with deconstruction training being provided in two main stages: 1) soft-strip material removal of finish materials, such as cabinets, flooring, appliances, lighting, plumbing, windows, doors and other architectural features and 2) full structural disassembly of a building.

The funding we are requesting through this grant will help us make sure that at least the first stage is accomplished. As more funding becomes available, we will move into the second stage. Soft strip education can lead to jobs within the existing demolition, construction and remodeling industries, while the deconstruction contractor training level can later provide more full-time deconstruction positions. If we get enough funding for both stages, we will be able to move more quickly to train deconstruction contractors. If not, we will seek employment for trainees through partner organizations that we know are dedicated to adding soft strip to their existing programs. Employer partners, including LBC, Skanska, Southern Demolition & Environmental and 360 Recycling will collectively provide work experience for 40 program participants during the performance period, with 70% retention expected after 6 months. Holder Construction and JE Dunn Construction have also expressed interest in providing work experience to trainees.

To further encourage success, the second stage will be to hold a training for contractors to introduce them to deconstruction. This will help build the need for the labor pool we are creating. Success will only be fully achieved as we build both a labor pool and a contractor pool, support and expand LBC and other reuse centers to sell reclaimed materials, and further develop the end market for these materials. A long-term goal of the pilot is to seed the creation of social enterprises that work to “upcycle” the materials retrieved through deconstruction and sold through reuse centers. These enterprises can help “Build the capacity of low- to moderate income entrepreneurs and enterprises in communities of color, and bolster the local economy by supporting businesses in low income neighborhoods. Many distressed communities experience blight and crime, but using public and private capital to support new businesses and microenterprises can help expand the neighborhood asset base. Investments in training programs for micro-business ownership can offer a path to financial stability for many low- to moderate income families. The Neighborhood Development Center in St. Paul, Minn., for example, works to position budding entrepreneurs in low-income communities of color to invest in their neighborhood revitalization. Since 1993, more than 500 of its graduates have launched businesses, sustaining 2,200 jobs and returning \$64 million to their communities in payroll, taxes and rent annually.” *Annie E Casey - “Changing the Odds”*

Barriers to deconstruction and reuse are many: perceived cost increases for deconstruction as compared with demolition, permit applications that fail to identify decon as a viable option, low tipping fees or other practices that make disposal easier and more consumer-friendly than reuse, community awareness of the availability of alternatives to disposal as well as a lack of deconstruction contractors and building material reuse centers.

At this point, Atlanta has only one demolition contractor who performs limited deconstruction. LBC also does “soft strip” decon, but does not yet execute full building disassembly. There are also only 2 reuse centers, LBC and Habitat ReStore, which offer reclaimed building materials. By contrast, Portland, Oregon [which is a third of the size of Atlanta] has 5 reuse centers and 7 deconstruction contractors.

Our greatest hope for this project is that it builds on the past work of our many partners by expanding and creating a more robust reuse economy in Atlanta. Our project scope is limited but the potential for this work to continue is limited only by the number of buildings being taken down in Atlanta and the capacity for civic leaders to make sure they are taken down in such a way that enables the material wealth embodied in them to return to the community. Therefore, we hope that this project is just a start.

Within the timeline of our overall project we will:

- Train 40 residents in soft strip deconstruction. Stage 1 trainings
- Educate contractors about the benefits of deconstruction
- Build the capacity of LBC to create a full-building deconstruction program
- Connect trained residents with employers leading to the hire of at least 70% of trainees
- **Work with the City and others to remove barriers to decon**
- Train at least 5 additional contractors to either include decon or become decon contractors. Stage 2 trainings.
- Create greater awareness within the community of the benefits of decon and reuse
- Build a network of support for reuse organizations, businesses and community activists
- Use this network to encourage the growth of other reuse and upcycling opportunities
- Start seeding the creation of a much deeper “reuse culture” within the city of Atlanta

#### Data Tracking

- All data to be funneled to and centralized with LBC for reporting.
- Data will be collected by each pilot partner, with training and testing executed through BMRA’s testing and credentialing system “Classmark.”
- Assessment tracking will be through Georgia Works!
- Employment tracking will be through LBC.

#### Environmental Results – Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures.

Deconstruction and reuse are the most underutilized tools available to cities to reduce the impact of our present linear model of construction and waste. Deconstruction can generally salvage up to 90% of the materials present within a building. Retail sales of the materials salvaged then generate resources that reduce the need for new materials and thus lessen the impacts associated with increased demand for new materials. The upcycling of salvaged materials then decreases even further the demand for new materials.

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**From:** Swingle, Pam <swingle.pamela@epa.gov>

**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 9:38 AM

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**Subject:** RE: Potential collaboration with City of Atlanta?

Hey Barbara,

The Lifecycle Building Center project on workforce development. They’ve been working with LBC and this is part of their grant..the partnership, right Kim? It would be great if we dug deeper into the workforce piece of this utilizing the Brownfields model. Thanks!

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*Pam Swingle*

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**From:** Alfano, Barbara <[Alfano.Barbara@epa.gov](mailto:Alfano.Barbara@epa.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 8:08 AM

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**Subject:** Potential collaboration with City of Atlanta?

**Importance:** High

GM Everyone,

I am asking for your ideas today. They don't need to be fleshed out. If you have any suggestions for ways to collaborate with the City, please let me know by 3:00 PM today. Sorry for the short notice, but Mary is meeting with the Michelle Wiseman, Director Waste Diversion & Outreach, and the Chief Sustainability Officer Shelby Buso on Wednesday and Cesar wants a briefing early tomorrow morning. Also, if you have any plans underway please let me know those as well by 3. Thanks!

*Barbara Alfano*

**PCB & Sustainability Section Chief**

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